

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SENV, OECD, CA, US
SUBJECT: ENVIRONMENTAL STATISTICS

FOR OES, MR. GLASOE

DUE TO TIME ELEMENT, FOLLOWING LETTER TO YOU FROM C. D.
ROBERTSON, WITH ENCLOSURE, BEING TRANSMITTED TELEGRAPHICAL-
LY. LETTER FORWARDED VIA POUCH.

"DEAR PAUL: AS PROMISED, I ENCLOSE A COPY OF EVAN
ARMSTRONG'S INTERVENTION DURING THE OECD ENVIRONMENT
COMMITTEE EXTENDED BUREAU MEETING OF APRIL 27TH.

"THIS PAPER HAS BEEN SENT TO OUR OECD PERMANENT
DELEGATION FOR DISTRIBUTION."

ENCLOSURE: "ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE, EXTENDED BUREAU:
27TH APRIL/78, AGENDA ITEM #4 (PART 2), SUBJECT -
PROGRESS MADE WITH RESPECT TO THE REPORT ON THE STATE
OF THE ENVIRONMENT"

"MR. CHAIRMAN: THE PAPER CIRCULATED BY THE UNITED
STATES DELEGATION CONCERNING DIRECTIONS TO THE COMMITTEE
RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PREPARATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL
STATISTICS IS A MOST APPROPRIATE ONE. THE COMMITTEE'S
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REPORT IS A MOST USEFUL DOCUMENT OUTLINING THE STATE OF
THE ART WITH RESPECT TO ENVIRONMENTAL STATISTICS.
FURTHER, THE COMMITTEE HAS DEVELOPED A FRAMEWORK, WHICH
PROVIDES AN EFFECTIVE SYSTEM FOR THE ASSEMBLY OF DATA.
WE AGREE WITH THE U.S. DOCUMENT WHICH SUGGESTS, THAT
IT IS MOST IMPORTANT TO DECIDE WHAT ISSUES WE REALLY
WISH TO DEAL WITH. I WOULD LIKE TO SHARE WITH YOU SOME

IDEAS AND PROPOSE SOME SPECIFIC STEPS THAT COULD BE TAKEN AND WHICH WOULD PROVE USEFUL TO THE ONGOING WORK OF THE COMMITTEE.

"(1) WE BELIEVE THAT THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE SHOULD BE PROVIDING SOME OBJECTIVE INFORMATION ON THE STATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT.

"(2) THE COMMITTEE HOWEVER, SHOULD NOT ATTEMPT TO PROVIDE SUCH INFORMATION ON TOO GENERAL OR BROAD A SPECTRUM, BUT SHOULD IDENTIFY AND SELECT CERTAIN ISSUE AREA FOR REPORTING.

"(3) IN CONSIDERING WHAT SELECTIVE AND/OR OBJECTIVE INFORMATION/REPORTING SHOULD BE PROVIDED, WE MUST ENSURE THAT WE ARE CAPABLE OF INITIAL DELIVERY AND WE MUST ALSO ENSURE PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING AND ACCEPTANCE AS WELL AS SCIENTIFIC VALIDITY.

"(4) IF INDEED WE ARE TO PROVIDE SUCH OBJECTIVE REPORTING, THE ORGANIZATION RESPONSIBLE FOR ITS GENERATION MUST BE ABLE TO PROVIDE AN OVERVIEW OF DATA, TRENDS AND DEVELOPMENTS. BY OVERVIEW, WE REFER TO THE ABILITY TO DESCRIBE, IN THE MOST GENERAL WAY, THE RELATIVE HEALTH OR CONDITION OF THE ENVIRONMENT OR SOME SPECIFIC SEGMENT OF IT AND AN INDICATION AS TO THE
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VALIDITY/CREDIBILITY OF THE RELEVANT INFORMATION.

"(5) WITH RESPECT TO CERTAIN SEGMENTS OF THE ENVIRONMENT, THERE WOULD SEEM TO BE TWO SPECIFIC AREAS WHERE IN THE INTERNATIONAL FIELD THERE IS ALREADY ESTABLISHED PROVEN COMPETENCE. THESE AREAS ARE AIR AND WATER. BOTH ARE HIGHLY VISIBLE MEDIA AND AFFECT EVERYONE. THERE IS A HIGH PUBLIC INTEREST. THE FACT THAT DATA IS MORE READILY AVAILABLE IN THESE TWO AREAS THAN MANY OTHERS, SHOULD FACILITATE THE DEVELOPMENT OF REPORTS ACCEPTABLE TO THE PUBLIC.

"(6) WE WOULD PROPOSE THEREFORE, THAT THIS COMMITTEE REQUEST THAT SPECIFIC ATTENTION BE GIVEN TO THE IMPACT OF THE ISSUES TO BE IDENTIFIED UPON THE QUALITY OF AIR AND OF WATER.

"(7) PRESENTLY, THE OECD IS KNOWN FOR THE HIGH QUALITY OF ITS INFORMATION AND REPORTING IN THE AREAS OF ECONOMICS AND SCIENCE. WHEN ONE PICKS UP A NEWSPAPER AND READS THAT THE OECD HAS COMMENTED THAT THE ECONOMIC SITUATION IN OECD COUNTRIES IS ALONG CERTAIN LINES, IT

IS GENERALLY ACCEPTED AS VERY CREDIBLE INFORMATION. IT
SEEMS TO US THAT THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE COULD BE IN
THE POSITION OF BECOMING KNOWN FOR THE QUALITY AND
RELIABILITY OF ENVIRONMENTAL REPORTING IN THE SAME WAY
AS OTHER SECTORS OF OECD."
ENDERS

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